DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 178 933 CS 205 279

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TITLE A Study of Selected Alternate Literary Conventions in Fiction for Children and Young Adults and an Examination of the Responses of Professionals Influential in Juvenile Literature to the Presence of These Conventions.
PUB DATE [75]
NOTE 31p.; Research prepared at the University of British Columbia

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescent Literature; *Childrens Literature; Content Analysis; *Fiction; *Literary Analysis; *Literary Conventions; *Literary Criticism; Literature Appreciation; Research

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted for the purposes of demonstrating the presence of literary innovation in contemporary juvenile fiction and of assessing the way in which influential reviewing media and professional textbooks on children's literature responded to such a presence. To accomplish the first purpose, a survey of literary criticism was performed, and the identified literary conventions were validated through a questionnaire sent to 25 authorities on juvenile literature. Of the 22 conventions offered for validation, 20 were accepted, including the use of episodes, antiheroes, zany characters, and dialects. Selections from 15 books demonstrated that these 20 literary conventions could be found in contemporary juvenile literature. To accomplish the second purpose of the study, an instrument was prepared to assess 72 reviews and seven textbooks of juvenile literature. These reviews and textbooks had more favorable than unfavorable responses to the 20 literary conventions, but also included a substantial proportion of neutral and mixed attitudes toward the presence of selected literary conventions in juvenile literature. The data suggest that juvenile textbook authors need to be more aware of the innovations and changes occurring in contemporary juvenile literature, adult literature, and literary criticism. (RL)

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A STUDY OF SELECTED ALTERNATE LITERARY CONVENTIONS IN FICTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS AND AN EXAMINATION OF THE RESPONSES OF PROFESSIONALS INFLUENTIAL IN JUVENILE LITERATURE TO THE PRESENCE OF THESE CONVENTIONS

Wendy K. Sutton

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

The need to provide high school students with a wider range of literary experiences was recognized over twenty years ago. Studies of young people's response to literature, such as those pioneered by James Squire (1956, 1964), provided disturbing evidence of the need to help students acquire an awareness of the wide variety of forms that literary expression can take. Squire found that students brought narrow, hampering predispositions to the examination of a piece of literature which resulted in their approaching each story with the same criteria "regardless of the uniqueness of a single work of fiction." He also found that many of the critical dispositions brought by students to the reading of literature -- dispositions which he emphasized were often "acquired concerns" -- almost inevitably restricted their response and their ability to interpret what they read. For example, for many students the significant test of the quality of literature was whether it was "true to life." "Good description" was another of the fixations which he found adversely affected meaningful reading of literature.

Squire and others also found that students seemed to share a fixation with the obvious features of plot. They almost always misinterpreted literature which derived its primary value from the experience and feelings of the characters rather than from the narrative development of the plot. In fact, such findings

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led Squire to strongly recommend that teachers re-examine their current instructional practices to ensure that narrow, inflexible literary criteria were not being encouraged by their teaching.

A major study by Alan Purves -- Literature Education in Ten Countries (1973) -- provided support for many of Squire's concerns. For example, Purves found that many of the responses expressed by students were the direct result of secondary schooling which had inculcated a preferred set of responses to literature, with students in different countries merely demonstrating a different set of acquired responses. As does Squire, Purves suspects that teachers are at least partially to blame for students' limited responses to literature for he found that they exercise a form of literary indoctrination (1974).

Such limited awareness of the complexity of literature as has been found among young people by Squire and subsequent researchers is particularly distressing when viewed in the light of research that suggests that such narrow responses may have been encouraged and even determined by educators. This concern is compounded by the findings of recent research studies which conclude that novels currently being written for adolescents tend to be novels of character, not novels of incident (Muller, 1975). In a recent study of fifty years of Newbery award and honor books, for example, it was noted that the action in these novels had shifted from the externally adventurous to the psychologically motivated (Solt, 1973).

Today's young people need to be equipped to handle the complexities found in modern literature if they are to become mature, independent thinkers. Contemporary literature offers a multiplicity of values and philosophical perspectives and more and more frequently these are being expressed in unconventional artistic and literary forms which more effectively accommodate them. The conventions of literature are changing and may change even more dramatically as writers of both adult and children's literature use an ever-widening range of literary techniques to portray our quickly-changing, more complex world. It is

essential, therefore, that adults directly responsible for the intellectual growth of young people be in a position to share with them and to help them interpret the newer forms of literary expression through which are presented many of the philosophical, sociological, and moral concerns of our time. To accomplish this, however, educators, librarians and parents need to be informed of the variety and complexity of juvenile literature available and for this information they mainly depend upon the reviewing media and professional textbooks which deal with children's literature.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Believing that a means by which to provide a rich variety of literary experiences is not only available but often to be found in the spontaneous reading of many young people, this researcher designed the following two-part study: first, a demonstration of the presence of literary innovation in contemporary juvenile fiction, literary innovation parallel to that found in modern adult literature; second, an assessment of the extent to which influential reviewing media and professional textbooks on children's literature were aware of and receptive to the presence of this literary innovation in books for young people. Whether those influential in the discussion and criticism of literature for school-age children recognized, accepted, or were even aware of the many alternate literary conventions that appear to have made their way from adult literature to books for children and young adults was the major focus of the second part of this study. This researcher did not assume that the conventional analytical tools of literary criticism were no longer valid. What she did question, however, was whether the literary criteria used by reviewers and authors of professional textbooks were sensitive enough or flexible enough to accommodate many of the literary innovations to be found in today's literature.

In order to accomplish these two purposes, two instruments had to be constructed. Instrument One was designed to identify selected alternate

literary conventions in contemporary juvenile fiction and thus help to demonstrate the presence of these conventions in books currently being written for children and young adults. Instrument Two was designed to help assess the extent to which reviewers and textbook authors acknowledged and accepted the specific alternate literary conventions that had been identified as present in the juvenile books selected for this research.

While literature today is still responsive to the conventional tools of literary criticism, new analytical tools are also necessary if the evaluation and criticism of many of the new juvenile books is to be valid. However, in order to develop the analytical techniques required, professionals in the field of juvenile literature need to be aware of and knowledgeable about the growing number of alternate literary conventions that are becoming more and more prevalent in literature for both adults and children. Instruments such as the two designed for this study might serve as examples to reviewers, librarians, academicians and teachers of a means by which they can be helped to identify and evaluate some of the alternate literary conventions currently found in literature for children and young adults. However, these instruments are not presented as, nor are they to be regarded as, a set of norms or literary aspects that <u>should</u> be in a book; rather, they are a means of identifying what, in fact, <u>is</u> in a book.

An examination of related research and articles produced very few studies that revealed an awareness of some of the literary innovations present in contemporary juvenile fiction. In the one or two that did (Muller, 1973; Stanek, 1975), this aspect was not the primary focus of the research but was a by-product of these researchers' findings. No study was found that compared adult and juvenile fiction from the perspective of the innovative or experimental literary aspects which they shared. On the basis of the research and writings available, it appeared that the presence in juvenile literature of some of the alternate literary conventions currently found in adult literature had not yet caught the attention and/or interest of researchers in the field.

DEMONSTRATING PRESENCE OF LITERARY
INNOVATIONS IN JUVENILE LITERATURE

To accomplish the first purpose of identifying a selection of alternate literary conventions in juvenile fiction comparable to that found in contemporary adult fiction, three separate procedures were followed -- a survey of the literary criticism of contemporary adult fiction, a questionnaire to twenty-five validators, and a test of interrater reliability. The details of these procedures and the major findings that emerged are presented within the context of the two research questions related to this portion of the study.

QUESTION ONE: Can specific alternate literary conventions be identified through a survey of the literary criticism of contemporary adult fiction in order to construct a valid and reliable instrument which can be used to identify the same conventions in literature for children and young adults?

> Sub-Question 1a: What are some of the specific alternate literary conventions found in contemporary adult literature that are also present in literature currently being written for children and young adults?

The survey of literary criticism itself, the results of the questionnaire to the twenty-five authorities serving as validators, and the results of the interrater reliability test of Instrument One all combined to provide the measure of validity and reliability required to answer this research question, and its sub-question, affirmatively. First, the survey of literary criticism was used as the means by which this researcher identified twenty-two alternate literary conventions which she believed were comparatively prevalent in literature currently being written for children and young adults. In keeping with the jury method of validation, this list of twenty-two conventions was sent in the form of a questionnaire to twenty-five authorities in juvenile literature to validate the premise that these alternate literary conventions are found in books specifically written for young readers. These twenty-five authorities were chosen as validators because of their knowledge of and influential positions in children's literature as professors, major editors, authors, reviewers and librarians. All twenty-five

validators returned the questionnaires and the proportion of agreement among them as to the presence of these twenty-two conventions in contemporary juvenile literature was .91 or 91 percent. In addition to returning the questionnaires, many of the respondents wrote separate letters or added comments to the questionnaire and suggested titles of juvenile books which they felt contained the specific conventions that they had acknowledged as present in literature for children and young adults.

It had been decided by this researcher that Instrument One would include only those alternate literary conventions that at least a proportion of .80, or 80 percent, of the validators agreed were present in literature for children and young adults. Only two of these conventions received a proportion of acknowledgment of less than .80. Although these two conventions -- convention 2 (ironic humor) and convention 17 (lack of sequential plot) -- received proportions of .76 and .72, respectively, they were dropped from the original list. The remaining twenty conventions, with proportions of acknowledgment ranging from .80 to 1.0, became the basis for Instrument One. Four of the conventions listed in the questionnaire were acknowledged by all twenty-five validators for a proportion of 1.0: convention 3 (episodic); convention 10 (anti-hero); convention 12 (zany characters); and convention 14 (dialect/vernacular). Four more conventions were identified as present in juvenile literature by .96 of the respondents: convention 1 (open-ended); convention 5 (restricted perspective); convention 15 (satire/parody); and convention 16 (word play). Seven of the conventions received a proportion of acknowledgment of .92 from the validators: convention 6 (two or more narrators); convention 7 (predominantly introspective); convention 8 (alienation/isolation predominant); convention 9 (basically psychological); convention 19 (incidents of fantasy with psychological overtones); convention 20 (elements of the unusual/grotesque); and convention 22 (mixture of traditional and contemporary). Three of the conventions were identified by .88 of the respondents: convention 11 (disregard for character development);

convention 18 (emphasis upon the nonrational); and convention 21 (unusual/ridiculous names). The two remaining conventions that were included in the final instrument received proportions of acknowledgment of .84 and .80, respectively: convention 4 (mood or theme predominant) and convention 13 (surrealism). Thus, the twenty conventions named above, with a change in identifying number due to the deletion of conventions 2 and 17 from the original list, were used to construct Instrument One. Table 1 identifies each of the twenty-two conventions by listing them as they were in the questionnaire. The proportions of acknowledgment ranged from .72 to 1.0 and the overall or average proportion of acknowledgment among the validators was .91.

As a result of questions asked by a few of the validators, as well as explanations that this researcher found it necessary to make when discussing the individual items in the instrument with the raters chosen to establish its reliability, the descriptions of fifteen of the original conventions were modified slightly, although great care was taken not to change the original meaning or intention. After these minor changes in wording were made, the final list of twenty alternate literary conventions became Instrument One. Three qualified raters and this researcher then tested the reliability of Instrument One by analyzing seven juvenile books which met specific criteria. The purpose was to identify which, if any, of the alternate literary conventions were present in one or more of these books. The overall proportion of agreement between this researcher and the three raters, which was also the measure of the reliability of the instrument, was .92. That is, the proportion of agreement as to the specific conventions believed by the four raters to be found in each of the seven books was .92, or 92 percent. Thus, the results from these three procedures -- the survey of literary criticism, the questionnaire, and the test of interrater reliability -- combined to identify specific alternate literary conventions and to affirm that a survey of the literary criticism of contemporary adult prose fiction can be used to construct a valid and reliable instrument for the purpose

Table 1 Proportions of Acknowledgment of Alternate Literary Conventions by Authorities

Alternate Literary Conventions	Number of Validators (N = 25)	Proportion of Acknowledgment
1. Open-ended--temporary or inconclusive resolutions	24	.96
2. Lack of sequential plot development	18	.72
3. Episodic collection of incidents	25	1.00
4. Mood or theme/idea more dominant than story line/plot	21	.84
5. Told through the restricted, one-sided perspective of the protagonist	24	.96
6. Told through the perspective of two or more narrators	23	.92
7. Predominantly introspective	23	.92
8. Alienation/isolation emphasized	23	.92
9. Story basically psychological in its orientation	23	.92
10. Unconventional anti-hero protagonist	25	1.00
11. Disregard for character development	22	.88
12. Unusual, zany characters	25	1.00
13. Deliberate distortion of reality (surreal)	20	.80
14. Use of dialect/vernacular/slang/profanity	25	1.00
15. More than one level of meaning--e.g., satire/irony/parody	24	.96
16. Word play/twisted syntax/unexpected combinations	24	.96
17. Humor ironic rather than comic	19	.76
18. Emphasis upon the nonrational--dreams/nightmares/fantasy	22	.88
19. Fantasy with psychological overtones	23	.92
20. Elements of the unusual/grotesque/bizarre	23	.92
21. Use of unusual/ridiculous/bizarre names	22	.88
22. Modern use of traditional forms such as myth and fairy tales	23	.92
Overall proportion of acknowledgment		.91

of identifying specific alternate literary conventions in literature for children and young adults.

The final version of Instrument One is given in Table 2. The individual items have been coded to identify the specific conventions that were not changed, those that remained the same but were elaborated upon, those in which a word or two were either changed or added, and the three conventions that were reworded in order to clarify the meaning. It should be noted that the numbers used to identify specific conventions have changed due to the deletion of conventions 2 and 17 from the original list. From hereon any reference to individual conventions will be in accordance with the numbering found in Table 2 and this list is now known as Instrument One.

QUESTION TWO: What are some contemporary books for children and young adults which demonstrate that the specific alternate literary conventions identified in this study are present in juvenile literature?

This question was answered by selecting fifteen demonstration books which met specific criteria and analyzing them with Instrument One to identify the specific alternate literary conventions contained in each. A total of eighty-eight conventions were identified in the fifteen books and the number of times a single convention was represented ranged from two to eleven. The number of alternate literary conventions found in a single book ranged from three to nine. Excerpts were then selected from these fifteen books to demonstrate the presence of each of the twenty conventions in books written for children and young adults. These excerpts, with the additional support given them by the titles suggested by the validators, demonstrated the presence of these twenty alternate literary conventions in juvenile literature and served to answer Question Two. Table 3 summarizes the above data and contains the following information: (a) the number and titles of the demonstration books containing a specific convention and (b) the number and specific alternate literary conventions found in each of the demonstration books. These conventions, books, and the many titles offered by the validators supported this researcher's belief that a wealth of literary innovation and diversity is to be found in contemporary juvenile literature.

Table 2 Final Version of Instrument One

Change[a]	Alternate Literary Conventions
C	1. Open-ended--the ending or resolution is temporary or inconclusive
E	2. Episodic collection of incidents--events are not sequentually structured in close cause-and-effect relationships
C	3. Mood or idea/theme more dominant than the sequence of events or plot
R	4. Only the restricted perspective of the protagonist-narrator is presented--told in the first person
U	5. Told through the perspective of two or more narrators
E	6. Predominantly introspective--emphasis upon the protagonist's thoughts and feelings
C	7. Alienation/isolation predominant
U	8. Story basically psychological in its orientation
E	9. Unconventional anti-hero protagonist--fundamentally weak, unadmirable, or evil; a misfit or loser in contrast to the conventional literary figure of stature
E	10. Disregard for character development--no change in protagonist's self-awareness or moral perception due to event(s)
U	11. Unusual, zany characters
R	12. The nature of "real" experience is radically and willfully distorted--surreal (consider text and/or illustrations)
U	13. Use of dialect/vernacular/slang/profanity
C	14. More than the literal level of meaning intended--e.g., satire/parody/burlesque/fable
E	15. Word play/twisted syntax/unexpected word combinations (this does not apply to dialect)
E	16. Emphasis upon the nonrational--dreams/nightmares/other manifestations of subconscious experience
C	17. Incidents of fantasy with psychological overtones
C	18. Elements of the unusual/grotesque/bizarre/ridiculous
U	19. Use of unusual/ridiculous/bizarre names
R	20. Mixture of traditional forms such as myth and fairy tale with aspects of contemporary society

[a]U = Unchanged; E = Elaborated upon; C = Change or addition of one or two words; R = Reworded.

Table 3 Alternate Literary Conventions Present in Demonstration Books

Demonstration Books	Alternate Literary Conventions																				Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
A Hero Ain't Nothin' But a Sandwich	x		x		x	x			x				x								6
Na-ni			x									x	x								3
Good Old James	x	x	x				x		x	x				x							7
Dragon, Dragon														x	x					x	3
Rumble Fish	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x											9
Story Number 4	x		x							x		x				x					5
The Story of Bip			x	x		x		x			x					x	x	x			8
A Game of Dark			x				x	x								x	x	x			6
Ox: The Story of a Kid at the Top			x	x		x	x		x	x											6
Figgs and Phantoms											x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		8
Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang											x			x	x	x		x	x		6
Among the Dolls			x					x									x	x			4
Marcia	x		x		x	x		x					x								6
Allumette											x			x				x	x	x	5
Let Me Fall Before I Fly	x		x				x	x								x	x				6
Total	6	2	11	3	2	5	5	6	4	4	4	3	3	5	3	6	5	6	3	2	88

RESPONSE OF PROFESSIONALS TO THE PRESENCE OF ALTERNATE LITERARY CONVENTIONS IN JUVENILE LITERATURE

The second purpose of this study was to examine the influential reviewing media and recent textbooks on children's literature in order to assess the scope and nature of the responses of authorities in the field of children's literature to the presence of these selected alternate literary cenventions in literature for children and young adults. The procedures followed to fulfill this purpose involved the use Instrument One and a new instrument, Instrument Two. Three qualified raters and this researcher also tested this second instrument for interrater reliability. This involved using this instrument to analyze the twenty-eight reviews of the seven juvenile books that had been used to measure the reliability of Instrument One. The overall proportion of agreement among the raters for the three sets of data that combined to measure the reliability of Instrument Two was .90, or 90 percent.

The survey of the few available research studies and articles dealing with the analyses of reviewing media and professional textbooks on literature for children and young adults revealed a consensus among the researchers and authorities that no single reviewing medium nor textbook can meet all the needs of the professionals using them. Each of the studies involving a comparison of reviewing media did so on the basis of the reviews of books which all the media being analyzed had reviewed. In this study, however, the analyses were not limited in this way as this researcher felt that, by including reviews of books which they did not all review, differences among the media would be more apparent. Also, most of the studies analyzed involved keeping a "tally" of the number of times a specific item from a list of criteria was found in the reviews and the reviewing media being examined. No studies were found that evaluated or measured the attitudes of reviewers or of textbook authors toward the books, or toward specific literary aspects within the books, which they discussed.

Instrument Two was used to analyze the seventy-three reviews of the fifteen demonstration books that had been published in the six reviewing media

selected for this study. It was also used to analyze any discussions of the fifteen demonstration books that were found in the seven professional textbooks chosen for this research. In addition to its earlier use in the analysis of the demonstration books, Instrument One was used to analyze two specific types of content found in the seven professional textbooks on juvenile literature. First, the more general presentations of literary criticism and the criteria for the evaluation of juvenile literature presented by the authors of these textbooks were examined. Then, still using Instrument One, any discussions of juvenile books of the same genres as those of the demonstration books were analyzed. The purpose of the latter was to assess whether these authors referred to some of the alternate literary conventions in their discussions of specific books, demonstration and/or others, even though they may not have acknowledged these conventions in their more general presentations of literary criteria and criticism. The details of these procedures and the major findings that emerged from the analyses of the reviewing media and professional textbooks are presented within the context of the research questions and sub-questions related to those portions of the study.

QUESTION THREE: What are the scope and nature of the responses of influential reviewers to the presence of selected alternate literary conventions in a sampling of contemporary juvenile fiction?

> Sub-Question 3a: Do these reviewers acknowledge the presence of any of the alternate literary conventions identified in this study?
>
> Sub-Question 3b: What is the attitude of these reviewers to the presence of these alternate literary conventions in literature for children and young adults?
>
> Sub-Question 3c: What is the overall evaluation by these reviewers of the books which have been identified as containing selected alternate literary conventions?

The data that was drawn by the three sub-questions presented above combined to answer Research Question Three. This set of questions was concerned with measuring the scope and nature of the responses of influential reviewers to the presence of the alternate literary conventions identified in this research in books for children and young adults. To gather the data, Instrument Two was

used to analyze the seventy-three reviews of the fifteen demonstration books that had been published in the six influential reviewing media selected for this research. The six reviewing media used were: The Booklist of the American Library Association (Booklist -- BL), The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books (Bulletin -- B), The Horn Book Magazine (Horn Book -- HB), Kirkus Reviews (Kirkus -- K), The New York Times Book Review (NYTBR), and Library Journal/School Library Journal (LJ/SLJ). Instrument Two was a sheet prepared for each of the fifteen demonstration books on which were listed the specific alternate literary conventions identified through the use of Instrument One for that particular book. A column was designated for each of the reviewing media that published a review of that book and spaces were identified in which the reviewer's acknowledgment of and attitude towards each convention listed were to be recorded.

In Sub-Question 3a the extent to which the reviewers acknowledged the presence of specific alternate literary conventions in their reviews was measured. The data of this sub-question established that the six reviewing media acknowledged a proportion of .60, or 60 percent, of the conventions that had been identified as present in the demonstration books. The proportions of acknowledgment by the six reviewing media ranged from .50 to .66. Except for School Library Journal with .50, the other five media, ranging from .60 to .66, were very similar in the total number of alternate literary conventions that they identified.

The data drawn by Sub-Question 3b identified the nature of the response, or the attitude, of the influential reviewers to the presence of the alternate literary conventions which they had acknowledged were present in the demonstration books. The proportion of conventions receiving a favourable response from the reviewing media was .49, nearly half the total number of responses. The proportion of conventions receiving a neutral response was .20 and the proportion receiving a mixed response was .19. The proportion of unfavorable responses to the presence of these conventions was .13. It should be remembered, however, that these proportions apply to just over half of the total number of alternate

literary conventions that had been established as present in the books being reviewed.

The data drawn by Sub-Question 3c assessed the overall evaluations of the demonstration books by the media which reviewed them. These overall evaluations were either favorable, mixed, or unfavorable; it was interesting to find that none of the demonstration books received a neutral or unspecified overall evaluation. Of the seventy-three overall evaluations, which corresponded to the number of reviews of the demonstration books written, thirty-one, or a proportion of .42, were favorable, twenty-eight (.38) were mixed, and fourteen (.19) were unfavorable. Thus, similar to the response to the conventions, the overall evaluations of the demonstration books by the reviewing media were generally favorable rather than unfavorable but included a large proportion of mixed responses.

A comparison of the data from Sub-Question 3b with that from Sub-Question 3c revealed that the proportion (.49) of favorable attitudes toward the conventions was larger than the proportion (.42) of favorable overall evaluations of the demonstration books. On the other hand, the proportion (.13) of unfavorable responses to the conventions was smaller than the proportion (.19) of unfavorable overall evaluations of the books. The proportion (.19) of mixed responses toward the conventions was much smaller than the proportion (.38) of mixed overall evaluations of the demonstration books by the reviewers. These comparisons suggest that there was no direct relationship between the attitudes of the reviewers to the presence of specific alternate literary conventions in the demonstration books and their overall evaluations of or attitudes toward these books. Instead, the data suggest that the overall evaluations by the reviewers reflect the influence of additional considerations. In summary then, and answering Research Question Three, the scope or extent of the responses of influential reviewers to the presence of selected alternate literary conventions in a sample of contemporary juvenile literature was .60, or 60 percent, and the nature of the response or attitude towards the presence of the conventions identified was generally favorable rather than unfavorable but included a large proportion of neutral and mixed attitudes.

Table 4 summarizes the data drawn by Sub-Questions 3a, 3b, and 3c. It presents the average proportions of the acknowledgment of the alternate literary conventions by the six reviewing media and compares their attitudes toward both the conventions and the demonstration books.

QUESTION FOUR: What are the scope and nature of the response of the authors of some of the most recently published textbooks on literature for children and young adults to the presence of selected alternate literary conventions in contemporary juvenile fiction?

Sub-Question 4a: Do these authors include any of the alternate literary conventions identified in this study in their literary criticism and criteria for the evaluation of books for children and young adults?

Sub-Question 4b: Do these authors acknowledge the presence of any of the alternate literary conventions in their discussion of the demonstration books used in this study? Do they specify the presence of these conventions in their discussion of any books which are of the same genres as those of the demonstration books?

Sub-Question 4c: What appears to be the attitude of these authors to the presence of these alternate literary conventions in literature for children and young adults?

The data drawn by the three sub-questions presented above combined to answer Research Question Four. This set of questions was concerned with measuring the scope and nature of the responses of the authors of seven recently published textbooks on juvenile literature to the presence of selected alternate literary conventions in contemporary literature for children and young adults. The textbooks selected were limited to those published from 1975 through 1977 to ensure timeliness and to enable the authors to include and/or reflect the latest in titles and trends in juvenile literature. The seven professional textbooks used were: Literature for Adolescents by Stephen Dunning and Alan B. Howes; Creative Growth through Literature for Children and Adolescents by Margaret C. Gillespie and John C. Conner; Children's Literature in the Elementary School by Charlotte S. Huck; Introduction to Children's Literature by Mary J. Lickteig; Now Upon a Time: A Contemporary View of Children's Literature by Myra Pollack Sadker and David Miller Sadker; Literature for Thursday's Child by Sam Leaton Sebesta and

Table 4 Summary of the Acknowledgment and Attitude Scores of the Reviewing Media

Reviewing Media	Presence Acknowledged	Attitude Scores of Reviewing Media							
		Unfavorable		Mixed		Neutral		Favorable	
		ALC[a]	Books	ALC	Books	ALC	Books	ALC	Books
Booklist	.60	.0	.0	.11	.4	.22	.0	.68	.6
Bulletin	.62	.2	.27	.27	.53	.18	.0	.35	.2
Horn Book	.66	.03	.0	.13	.5	.34	.0	.5	.5
Kirkus	.61	.08	.07	.23	.53	.21	.0	.48	.4
NYTBR	.61	.1	.27	.23	.27	.1	.0	.56	.45
SLJ	.50	.3	.43	.09	.07	.16	.0	.44	.5
Average Proportions	.60	.13	.19	.19	.38	.2	.0	.49	.42

[a]ALC = Alternate literary conventions.

William J. Iverson; and Children and Books by Zena Sutherland and May Hill Arbuthnot. From here on each of these professional textbooks is identified by referring to the last name or names of the authors.

The data of Sub-Questions 4a and 4b combined to measure the scope or extent to which these authors acknowledged the twenty alternate literary conventions identified in this research. The data of Sub-Question 4c measured the nature of the responses, or the attitude, of these textbook authors to the presence of the conventions that they had identified in literature for children and young adults.

The data of Sub-Question 4a established that in their literary criticism and criteria for the evaluation of books for young readers these textbook authors acknowledged a proportion of .19, or 19 percent, of the twenty alternate literary conventions identified in this study. The data drawn by Sub-Question 4b indicated that in their discussions of specific demonstration books, and of other books of the same genres, the authors of the seven textbooks referred to a proportion of .21 of the possible references to the twenty conventions. The scope or extent of the acknowledgment of these conventions by the textbook authors was therefore a combination of these two proportions resulting in a total proportion of .40. The total number of acknowledgments of specific conventions was fifty-six, ranging from the textbook by Lickteig with three to the one by Sadker and Sadker with fifteen, with corresponding proportions ranging from .15 to .75. The total proportions of acknowledgment of the individual conventions ranged from Convention 9, the anti-hero, with .0 to Convention 14, satire/parody, with 1.0. Table 5 summarizes the data gathered to answer Sub-Questions 4a and 4b by indicating the specific alternate literary conventions which were identified in the two analyses by the authors of each of the seven professional textbooks. It also contains the total proportions of acknowledgment of the twenty conventions by the textbook authors.

The data drawn by Sub-Question 4c assessed the nature of the attitudes of the authors of the seven professional textbooks to the presence of the

Table 5 Total Specific Alternate Literary Conventions Identified by Authors of Professional Textbooks

Professional Textbooks	Number of Acknowledgments	Alternate Literary Conventions																			Proportion of Acknowledgments
		Open-Ended	Episodic	Mood or Theme Predominant	Restricted Perspective	Two or More Narrators	Predominantly Introspective	Alienation Predominant	Basically Psychological	Anti-Hero	Lack of Character Development	Unusual, Zany Characters	Surrealism	Dialect/Slang/ Vernacular	Satire/Parody	Word Play	Emphasis on the Nonrational	Psychological Overtones	Elements of the Unusual	Unusual Names	Traditional/ Contemporary Mix	
	N=20	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
Dunning and Howes	7		x		x	x	x		x						x						x	.35
Gillespie and Conner	6	x						x	x					x	x			x				.30
Huck	10	x		x		x	x				x	x		x	x	x					x	.50
Lickteig	3											x			x					x		.15
Sadker and Sadker	15	x	x	x	x	x	x		x			x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	.75
Sebesta and Iverson	8	x	x		x	x	x		x					x	x							.40
Sutherland and Arbuthnot	7		x		x							x		x	x			x	x			.35
Proportions of acknowledgment		.57	.57	.29	.57	.57	.57	.14	.57	.00	.14	.57	.14	.71	1.0	.29	.14	.29	.29	.14	.43	.40

specific alternate literary conventions they had identified in juvenile literature. The proportion of the conventions receiving a favorable response from these authors was .57, over half of the total number of responses. The proportion receiving a neutral response was .16 and the proportion receiving a mixed response was slightly higher with .18. The proportion of the conventions identified that received an unfavorable response from these authors was .09, a small proportion of the total of fifty-six responses.

In summary then, and answering Research Question Four, the scope or extent of the acknowledgment by the textbook authors of selected alternate literary conventions in contemporary juvenile literature was .40, or 40 percent. The nature of their response or attitude towards the presence of the conventions they had identified was considerably more favorable than unfavorable but included a substantial proportion of neutral and mixed attitudes toward the presence of selected alternate literary conventions in literature for children and young adults. Table 6 summarizes the distribution of the attitudes of the textbook authors to the presence of the conventions which each identified.

Conclusions and Implications

Research Question One and Sub-Question 1a established that a valid and reliable instrument could be constructed from a survey of the literary criticism of contemporary adult literature. The twenty alternate literary conventions identified as present in books currently being written for children and young adults appear to support this researcher's belief that a wealth of literary diversity, similar to that characterizing adult fiction, is to be found in contemporary juvenile literature. In light of this evidence that specific alternate literary conventions are present in juvenile literature, it is important that professionals selecting books for young people be aware of this diversity and of specific books containing these literary options. Such knowledge will enable these professionals to offer students the richer and more varied literary experiences that were identified earlier as a specific need in light of the findings of

Table 6 Distribution of Attitudes of Textbook Authors to Presence of Conventions Identified

Professional Textbooks	Distribution of Attitude Scores				Total
	Unfavorable	Mixed	Neutral	Favorable	
Dunning and Howes	--	--	--	7	7
Gillespie and Conner	1	--	5	--	6
Huck	2	2	--	6	10
Lickteig	--	--	--	3	3
Sadker and Sadker	1	4	3	7	15
Sebesta and Iverson	--	2	--	6	8
Sutherland and Arbuthnot	1	2	1	3	7
Conventions acknowledged	5	10	9	32	56

recent research analyzing the responses of young people to literature. It is more necessary than ever that educators and librarians be aware of the many literary changes that have taken place in juvenile literature, changes that are in direct response to the more complex world being depicted in books written for children and young adults. Even the list of literary options itself, as found in Instrument One, can help to create an awareness of the presence of characteristics other than the traditional literary elements in books for young people. Also, the use of an instrument such as the one developed in this study would enable readers to identify, in addition to the conventional aspects, any alternate literary conventions which were present in specific juvenile books. The fact that Instrument One has been established as valid and reliable also makes it useful to academicians involved in the preparation of teachers and librarians for it exists as a tangible means by which the changes and innovations taking place in juvenile fiction can be identified and demonstrated.

Research Question Two led to the identification of eighty-eight examples of twenty alternate literary conventions in a sampling of juvenile books. Excerpts from these fifteen books were used to demonstrate the presence of each of these conventions in books currently written for children and young adults. The many juvenile titles offered by the validators also added support to the findings of this research question. In addition, these titles demonstrated the value of a list such as Instrument One for it was as a direct result of reading over this list of conventions that validators found that specific titles of juvenile books came to mind. The demonstration books and books suggested by the validators provide teachers and librarians with specific examples of fiction with which they can extend and enrich the literary experiences of their students. Also, these and many other contemporary juvenile books are part of the spontaneous or out-of-class reading of young people and therefore knowledge of them would enable teachers and librarians to build upon many of the literary experiences their students already bring to the reading of literature. In addition to these

values, the fact that juvenile books such as these contain literary characteristics comparable to those found in modern adult literature makes them a valuable introduction to adult literature.

Research Question Three established that the six influential reviewing media used in this study identified a proportion of .60, or 60 percent, of the alternate literary conventions established by this research as present in a sampling of books for children and young adults. In general, the attitude of the reviewers to the presence of these conventions was more favorable than unfavorable but also included a large proportion of neutral and mixed attitudes. There was also a range of attitude from favorable to unfavorable among the media towards specific conventions although there did not appear to be any specific alternate literary convention to which the reviewers were consistently negative. Similar to the response to the conventions, the overall evaluations of the demonstration books by the reviewing media were generally favorable rather than unfavorable but also included a large proportion of mixed responses. An even greater range in attitudes than found toward the conventions was apparent among the reviewers' responses to specific books. For example, the attitudes toward The Story of Bip, by Marcel Marceau, and Ox: The Story of a Kid at the Top, by John Ney, revealed a striking difference of opinion as each of these books received either completely favorable or unfavorable overall evaluations from the media reviewing them. This divergence of response points up the need for professionals selecting books for young people to draw upon the opinions found in a number of the reviewing media when making their choices.

Although the reviewing media seemed to be reasonably aware of a number of the alternate literary conventions identified in this study, their usefulness as a source of information of the presence of these conventions in contemporary juvenile literature was limited by a number of factors. First, almost no reference was made to the fact that these conventions have their counterparts in adult literature. In fact, except for one or two parallels drawn by reviewers

for Kirkus Reviews and The New York Times Book Review, no attempt was made by the reviewing media to view literature for children and young adults in the wider context of contemporary literature per se. Ironically, one of the persistent criticisms expressed by the reviewers was that a book and/or its illustrations were "too adult." Many similar comments suggested that some reviewers regard children's literature as an entity quite separate from literature in general.

Related to the actual content of the reviews, these reviewing media would be of much greater value to teachers and librarians using them if the reviewers had stated specifically rather than alluded to the presence of many of the conventions. These allusions assume a knowledge which the reader perhaps does not have. Also, although a number of the conventions were specifically acknowledged by the reviewers, their contribution to the literary quality of the books containing them was often not discussed nor assessed. Rather, the pattern among reviewers seemed to be to identify a particular alternate literary convention but then to view it in isolation rather than to discuss its contribution to the book as a whole. Often it is the combination of specific alternate literary conventions that is innovative rather than the convention itself. For example, unusual, zany characters are not, in themselves, innovative; it is when they are combined with surrealism and satire, as in Figgs and Phantoms by Ellen Raskin, that all three combine to create a book which is unconventional.

To be more useful to the professionals using them, it appears that writers for the reviewing media need to serve more as literary critics who help readers acquire an understanding of the specific conventions and innovations to which they allude or refer. Particularly in light of the increasing quantity of juvenile books being published each year, there is a greater need than ever for reviewers to provide enough specific information about a book to enable the reader to exercise his or her own judgment. Plot summaries and uncritical statements praising or denouncing books -- descriptions which sum up many of the reviews and textbook discussions analyzed in this research -- are of less value than ever to professionals who are trying to sort from the vast array of books available those

which will enable them to provide young people with a richer and more diversified range of literary experiences.

Research Question Four established that the professional textbooks on juvenile literature acknowledged a proportion of .40, or 40 percent, of possible references to the alternate literary conventions, one-third below the proportion acknowledged by the reviewing media. The number of these conventions identified by any one of the textbooks ranged from three to fifteen. The attitude of the textbook authors to the presence of the conventions they had identified was considerably more favorable than unfavorable but included a number of mixed and neutral responses. An examination of the distribution of the references to specific alternate literary conventions revealed that half of the twenty conventions were acknowledged in two or fewer of the textbooks. Consequently, ten of the conventions represented 77 percent of the total proportion of alternate literary conventions identified. Clearly then, the proportion of .40 is rather misleading for the data actually revealed that the authors of the textbooks appear to be relatively unaware of many of the innovations and changes that have taken place in juvenile literature. As a result, these recently published professional textbooks are not useful resources for information of this kind. Two textbooks were somewhat an exception to the conclusion just stated. Literature for Thursday's Child by Sam Leaton Sebesta and William J. Iverson, and Now Upon a Time: A Contemporary View of Children's Literature by Myra Pollack Sadker and David Miller Sadker both contained discussions of a number of the innovations to be found in contemporary literature for children and young adults. The textbook by Sadker and Sadker acknowledged a proportion of .75 of the alternate literary conventions, the highest proportion found among the seven professional textbooks and the six reviewing media analyzed in this research.

The data just summarized appear to suggest that the authors of the textbooks examined in this research are not keeping themselves informed of the many innovations and changes to be found in contemporary juvenile literature. Nor, with the possible exception of the two textbooks just mentioned, do they appear

to be very interested in these changes or in their relationship to contemporary adult fiction. Although all these authors appear to regard children's literature as part of the 'mainstream' of literature, they rarely draw any parallels between the two. Literature for Adolescents by Stephen Dunning and Alan B. Howes was the one exception for these two authors do discuss many of the alternate literary conventions within the context of literature per se. Although they do not state it specifically, the appropriateness of many of these literary options in juvenile literature appears to be an assumption underlying their discussions. However, they do not provide specific titles of books which contain the alternate literary conventions they mention.

The professional textbooks, in particular, seem to be very conservative and traditional in the books they choose to feature. Rarely were books included in their discussions which would be described as experimental or innovative. Perhaps the authors of such textbooks need to have a section devoted to just such books. The existence of such a category would, itself, encourage them to begin to notice books which would be described as "different." There was also evidence in the data of this study of a kind of prescriptive assessing of juvenile books which prevented professionals from seeing other aspects than those incorporated within the criteria they traditionally use. New categories and lists of literary options such as those found in Instrument One are perhaps two ways in which these professionals could be encouraged to be more flexible in their approach to many of the new books being written for children and young adults.

There also appears to be a strong need for professionals in children's literature to become more familiar with contemporary adult literature and literary criticism for, in this way, many of the parallels would be clearly evident. For example, although a number of the textbook authors described main characters who definitely have their counterpart in the anti-hero of adult literature, none of them acknowledged or even alluded to the presence of the anti-hero, convention 9, in juvenile literature. Teachers dealing with contemporary adult literature would

undoubtedly find specific references of this kind in professional materials most helpful in their teaching. By being aware of juvenile books which contained specific alternate literary conventions, they would be in a position to build upon a shared knowledge of this kind and use it as an introduction to more complex treatments of the same conventions.

Recommendations arising from the conclusions. The following recommendations, which are based upon the data drawn by the four research questions, are offered both as a summary and an extention of the conclusions and implications that have just been discussed.

: That teachers and librarians read widely in both contemporary adult and juvenile literature in order to keep informed of the trends and changes in literature for children and young adults.

: That schools subscribe to a number of reviewing media and have a range of up-to-date materials on juvenile and adult literature, both professional materials as well as literature.

: That teachers and librarians be involved in the ordering of juvenile literature and that both groups make a deliberate effort to be knowledgeable about what young people are reading. Even though some of these professionals may be personally offended by some of the content and language of contemporary books, it is important that they are approachable and willing to talk with young people about their reading.

: That teachers and librarians continue to take courses in both adult and juvenile literature in order to keep informed of changes in literature.

: That professionals using reviewing media as a guide to their selection of juvenile books encourage editors and reviewers to provide more specific information in their reviews, with discussion of literary characteristics as well as storyline.

: That analytical tools, such as those developed in this study, be used in addition to the traditional literary criteria by all professionals involved

in the selection and/or evaluation of literature for children and young adults. In this way, the literary criteria used will be flexible enough to accommodate both traditional and innovative characteristics.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. A study to determine the extent to which selected alternate literary characterize contemporary juvenile literature.
2. An examination of young people's responses to contemporary juvenile fiction containing selected alternate literary conventions.
3. An examination of the sensitivity of reviewers to the reading preferences of children and young adults.
4. A study of the proximity of literary innovations in adult literature and in juvenile literature.
5. A comparison of reviewers' assumptions regarding children's responses to innovative literary techniques with children's actual responses to literature containing these elements.
6. A study to measure the effectiveness of selected juvenile literature as an introduction to experimental and innovative adult fiction.
7. A study of the characteristics of juvenile books selected by authors for inclusion in their textbooks on literature for children and young adults.
8. A study of the literary criteria used by teachers and librarians in the evaluation of juvenile literature and a measure of the awareness of these professionals of literary options and innovation in books for children and young adults.
9. A study of teachers' knowledge of and response to contemporary poetry for children.
10. An examination of the responses of reviewers to innovations in the illustrating of books for children.

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